



Childhood Connections

May 7, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success, it is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways that professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections webpage](#).



This month’s Road to Success is the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL), a public research university located in the St. Louis region.

UMSL is creating pathways into early childhood education for a variety of aspiring early childhood educators. They offer a Master's in Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education, and a Bachelor's of Science in Early Childhood Education with an emphasis in Special Education. They also offer a Bachelor of Educational Studies with an Early Childhood Education emphasis that does not require teacher certification. For high school students interested in an early childhood career, UMSL offers their Future Teacher Leader Academy (FTLA) which is designed to increase recruitment of quality teachers across Missouri. UMSL brings in high school students for two weeks in the month of June to take two courses as dual credit.

Another pathway for aspiring educators is the Finish Line Teaching Apprenticeship from the Missouri Department of Labor and UMSL. This apprenticeship provides students with the opportunity for a paid position, work-based learning, mentorship, classroom learning, Missouri teacher certification, and the national apprenticeship certificate. Students are in the apprenticeship for three years and during this time they complete required coursework through UMSL while maintaining a position with a school district partner. Currently this apprenticeship serves students seeking certification in Elementary Education, but in Fall of 2025, UMSL will be adding an Early Childhood Education opportunity. Contact UMSL at 314-516-4970 for more information about these opportunities that support careers in early childhood.

NEW! Proposed Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan

Proposed changes in the draft 2025-2027 Missouri Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan are available to review under CCDF State Plan on [OOC Child Care Development Fund webpage](#).

OOC is accepting written public comments on the proposed changes from April 24, 2024, through May 24, 2024. Written comments can be submitted in three ways:

- Send an email to ChildhoodRules@dese.mo.gov
- [Complete this Public Comment Survey](#)
- Mail comments to:

DESE Office of Childhood
ATTN: Child Care Subsidy Administrator
205 Jefferson Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101

All written comments must be received at OOC by 5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, **May 24, 2024**. Review this [informational flyer](#) for more details about the public comment period.



NEW! OOC Stakeholder Engagement Webpage

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of developing or changing policies that impact parents and professionals.

To better promote these activities, OOC is excited to announce a new webpage for stakeholder engagement practices and activities.

Visit this [OOC webpage](#) to learn more!

NEW! Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Annual Performance Progress Report (APPR)

During this public comment period, OOC will hold a combination of virtual and in-person public hearings between May 6, 2024, and May 18, 2024, to review the proposed revisions to the Missouri CCDF State Plan. Check out this [informational flyer](#) to view the dates and times of the public hearings.

FINAL REMINDER! Enhancement Grants

One Child Care Relief Funds grant is currently available:

- Enhancement grants are available to assist child care providers with the purchase of items to enhance or upgrade their program.
- **Hurry!** Applications are due **May 31, 2024**, at 11:59 p.m.
- Receipts are not necessary when submitting the application. Eligible providers can apply with the list of items they want to purchase in the future, as long as all receipts are submitted by July 31, 2024.
- Visit the [Enhancement grant webpage](#) to read the full Terms and Conditions and to apply.

NEW! Financial Incentives for Early Childhood Registered Apprenticeship Programs

The Early Childhood Workforce Connection (ECWC) Incentive Fund is an initiative with the U.S. Department of Labor that assists in offsetting the cost of administering or expanding registered apprenticeship programs in approved occupations, such as child care. Employers and sponsors can receive up to \$1,000 per apprentice and a maximum of \$40,000 to launch, implement, or enhance programs and expand the workforce. Applications for funding will be considered through the end of this month (May 2024).

To learn more, check out the [Incentive Fund Overview](#) and the ECWC [resources page](#).

FINAL REMINDER! Registration for Kindergarten Observation Form Point of Contact Closing Soon

OOC is offering free training for kindergarten teachers to participate in the Missouri Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) for the 2024-25 school year. The KEA is a one-time assessment designed to measure a child's skills and behaviors when

Each year, the OOC reports on the progress of PDG activities in an APPR.

For updates on strategic planning, workforce development, and parent leadership activities, view the 2023 Annual Performance Report posted on the [Preschool Development Grant reporting webpage](#).

REMINDER! School-Age Afterschool Grant Opportunity

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) School-Age Afterschool Grant competition is now open for the 2024-2029 award period.

Awards are subject to availability of funding. Be sure the check back regularly to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) as any updates, changes, etc. will be noted there.

The deadline for applying is 1:00 p.m. CST on Friday, **May 24, 2024**.

Please visit the [Afterschool Grants webpage](#) for the application, guidelines, submission instructions, etc.

REMINDER! Preschool Start-Up Grants

A [Preschool Start-up Grant Administrative Memo](#) was recently

entering kindergarten and assist in determining a child's overall school readiness. The deadline for LEAs to sign-up their KOF Point of Contact has been extended to Friday, May 17, 2024. Learn more about the training in the [Administrative Memo](#) sent to all LEAs on March 28, 2024.

NEW! Trainings Added to Office of Childhood Training Library



OOO is excited to announce new online training (E-learning courses) in the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system.

Courses in the Office of Childhood Training Library include:

- ABCs of Safe Sleep: How to Reduce the Risk of Sleep-Related Infant Deaths
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Health and Safety Training
- Licensing Rules and Best Practices
- Supervision in Child Care
- Emergency Preparedness in Early Childhood Programs
- Poison Prevention and Safety Awareness
- MELS Course 1: An Introduction to the Missouri Early Learning Standards

Trainings can be taken for clock hour credit, which is given immediately following successful completion. For a better user experience, using Microsoft Edge is recommended.

Also, using a device that is larger than a phone to complete e-learning courses is recommended. These courses have high-quality embedded videos that require a reliable internet connection for the best experience.

Review the MOPD [Quick Start Guide](#) to confirm you have completed the basic MOPD system steps before taking training. Watch the [video instructions](#) and complete them in number order to use the Training Search and E-Learning features.

disseminated to all local education agencies to announce a new funding opportunity for preschool programs.

The application closes on **June 30, 2024**, at 11:59 p.m.

REMINDER! Child Care Inclusion Services

OOO, through the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, provides inclusion referral services, technical assistance, and training throughout the state to help families and caregivers of children with special needs.

A child with special needs is a child who may require enhanced child care services over that of a typically developing child due to an actual or perceived developmental disability and/or delay, health/mental health, or behavior issues.

To learn more [check out the Inclusion Services webpage](#).

NEW! Imagination Library Promotional Materials Coming Soon

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is now available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri.

A parent or guardian can register their child on the [Imagination Library national website](#). Books will be mailed directly to

Search for "DESE OOC" in the [MOPD System's event search](#) to find online training courses and register for them. Use the E-Learning Instructions to complete the courses and read full details. More new courses will be added in the coming months.

There is a small cost for some courses in the DESE Office of Childhood Training Library to cover the cost incurred for each user who begins a course. Users will have 12 months to complete the course once it begins and will not be able to complete the same course within the 12 months of completion for clock hours.

Questions? Contact mopd@dese.mo.gov or learn more at the [MOPD webpage](#).

REMINDER! DHSS Seeks Organizations to Help Provide Summer Meals to Children

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is looking for non-profit organizations throughout the state to help increase access to food for thousands of children over the summer months while school is not in session, when children often do not have access to free or reduced-price meals at school. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) reimburses organizations for meals they serve to children under the age of 18 years who are at risk of not having enough to eat during the summer months.

Organizations eligible to participate in the program as sponsors include non-profit organizations such as schools, faith-based organizations, camps, private nonprofit agencies, and local government entities. Sites qualify if they are located in areas of Missouri where at least half of the children are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

DHSS will accept applications from new non-profit organizations to participate in the program until **May 15**. More information about the SFSP is available online at the [Summer Food Service Program webpage](#).

REMINDER! Child Care Comprehensive Background Screening

Child care providers must submit the Comprehensive Background Check Notification

the home of registered children at no cost to the family.

As key partners supporting this activity, school districts and local public libraries will be receiving promotional materials provided by The Dollywood Foundation sometime early to mid-May 2024.

These items will be arriving from third party vendors and should not be returned to sender. Deliveries may arrive in more than one box

For questions about these promotional items, contact [Imagination Library](#).

Learn about Imagination Library enrollment in your area by [visiting our Imagination Library webpage](#)

REMINDER! Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) & Second Step Training Opportunities

New training dates have been added for developmental screening training, and Second Steps training.

Check out these training flyers for more details and registration information:

1. [Ages & Stages:3 and Ages & Stages:SE2 Questionnaire](#)
2. [Second Ste](#)

form before beginning the background check process. Once the notification form has been processed, OOC will provide further instructions for fingerprinting, Family Care Safety Registry screenings, and/or other state checks.

The MACHS registration codes may not be shared with anyone other than the individuals OOC has determined need to complete the fingerprint process. Detailed instructions are located on the [Child Care Background Check Process webpage](#).

Reminder! OOC is paying for the cost of fingerprinting for the required criminal background check for child care staff members. OOC will *not* issue reimbursement when there is any issue with the DESE automatic billing account and the individual chooses to pay for the cost of fingerprinting.

Please contact the Background Screening Unit at OCBackgroundChecks@dese.mo.gov or call 573-751-2450, option 2 if you have questions.

REMINDER! Enroll today in Missouri's Quality Assurance Report (QAR)



Early childhood centers, school district prekindergarten programs, and licensed family-child care providers interested in increasing the quality of their programs are eligible to join Missouri's Quality Assurance Report (QAR).

The QAR is a statewide program committed to demonstrating why quality matters every day. Participants receive, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)© assessments, one on one coaching, access to quality supports and resources, and a fully funded training opportunity for

RESOURCE! Women and Heart Disease

Heart disease is a leading cause of death for women, especially in their 40s, 30s, and 20s. Understanding risk factors and maintaining heart health especially during pregnancy is crucial. For more information, visit this [NIH webpage on women and heart disease](#).

REMINDER! Licensed and License-Exempt Providers

Ensure medical examination reports for new-hires are no older than one year from their hire date.

[Child care rules require medical examination reports](#) to be completed no more than 12 months prior to beginning work at the facility.

This allows providers to assess if there are any limitations or restrictions that may prevent the newly-hired caregiver from caring for a particular group of children to completing certain tasks.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEAD START! Celebrating 59 Years

May 18, 2024, is Head Start's 59th birthday! Head Start programs prepare America's most vulnerable young children to succeed in

staff who are interested in obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

Early learning programs can apply at any time during the year and will be contacted once space is available to actively begin the program.

Visit our [QAR webpage](#) for program information. [Fill out the application](#) if your program is interested in joining.

REMINDER! Child Care Data System

OOC has been reaching out to families to remind them to complete an application, or renew their application, in the child care data system. You can help us by sharing this information with families in your community:

- For families receiving subsidy in December 2023 or earlier, [this flyer for Existing Families](#) describes the steps to connect their historical information.
- For families who have not filled out an application before, [this flyer for New Families](#) can help them create a new account.
- Once the parent identifies their child care provider, the parent can use this flyer for [Selecting or Changing Your Child Care Provider](#) to select their provider in the system.

For assistance using the new system, parents can call 573-415-8605 extension 1

school and in life beyond the school years.

Head Start programs deliver services to children and families in areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

Learn more about the history of Head Start on the [Head Start Timeline](#).

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Ava Elementary has been collaborating with Head Start and other entities through their half-day Prekindergarten (Pre-K) program to ensure a smooth transition for students entering kindergarten.

The students attend half-day Head Start sessions, and after lunch, they are transported to the Ava Elementary campus. This arrangement allows them to become familiar with the school, make new friends, understand expectations, and work on the skills necessary for success in kindergarten.

This partnership includes children from Head Start, private Pre-K programs, as well as those attending a Family Child Care Home. The school actively seeks opportunities for their Parents as Teachers Parent Education Program and Pre-K programs to engage with the partnership. Their hope is to identify, and serve as many students as possible, ensuring they are well-prepared for kindergarten. Ava Elementary also places significant importance on working closely with community partners by organizing Parents as Teachers Parent Education Program connection meetings, which serve as a platform to promote parental involvement and raise awareness of developmental milestones.

Through these collaborative efforts, Ava Elementary Principal Katy Chapman and her team are creating a supportive and comprehensive Pre-K program. Principal Chapman said of the collaborative effort, "This partnership stands as a testament to the benefit of collaboration in education. With teachers, paraprofessionals, special services department, and Head Start staff working hand in hand, they have crafted an inclusive environment where every student can thrive. Their collective commitment and tireless efforts exemplify the profound impact that can be achieved when diverse teams unite for a common purpose: nurturing the potential of every child. Ava Elementary is blessed to have such exceptional advocates for students, whose dedication and commitment shine for those in our community."

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the April 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [March 2024](#)
- [February 2024](#)
- [January 2024](#)
- [November 2023](#)
- [October 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, May 21, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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